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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 002189

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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
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SUBJECT: PRT GARDEZ: LOGAR PROVINCE SIX MONTH ASSESSMENT

Classified By: PolCouns Sara Rosenberry for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) Logar is a stable, secure, and prosperous province close to Kabul. The onset of warm weather increased the number of security incidents but the province remains generally stable and attractive for development efforts. The exception is isolated Kharwar District, which insurgents use as a sanctuary and base for staging attacks in neighboring provinces, including Kabul. Coalition forces intend to increase their presence in Logar to deter insurgent activities. The proposed establishment of a new Czech Republic-led PRT in the province will help ensure conditions for development and reconstruction. The economy stands to benefit considerably from foreign investment in world-class copper deposits at Aynak. While prosperous relative to its southeastern neighbors, Logar still suffers from several common social ills, including high illiteracy and child mortality rates. The province is poppy-free and received a narcotics Good Performance Award from the GOA last year. Governor Hashimi is a capable administrator but has shown no enthusiasm for counter-insurgency programs or working with Coalition and PRT efforts to expand and strengthen government influence in rural areas. END SUMMARY

SECURITY: Stable and Cooperative Save Kharwar

2. (C) The onset of warm weather during the past six months has brought an expected increase in security incidents and insurgent activity in Logar. The province nevertheless remains relatively stable with limited, localized zones of insurgent influence and control. A key factor is the predominance of several large, cohesive, pro-government tribes that inhabit the province. A significant exception to the relative stability is Kharwar District in the South, where there is no effective administrative or security presence. This isolated area is a safe haven and staging area for insurgent activities in other provinces, notably Kabul and Ghazni. While the targets lie outside the province, insurgents also harass coalition and government

forces in Logar, mostly through IED attacks, including in Mohammed Agha District along the main road to Kabul. A high-profile incident was the May shooting of young girls as they left their school near Puli Alam, the provincial capital. There also have been a number of incidents in Charkh District that borders Kharwar. Coalition forces have increased counter-insurgency operations in the area, and PRT has begun complementary development activities. Coalition forces intend to place a FOB in Kharwar and to expand significantly the current FOB in Puli Alam to battalion strength.

13. (SBU) Azra District is perhaps more isolated than Kharwar and shares a short border with Pakistan. The district's staunch pro-government stance has deterred insurgent influence in the area. Security is sufficiently stable in the rest of Logar to enable economic development efforts to expand. The Gardez Regional Training Center (RTC) has trained over 150 ANAP who have been deployed with mixed results. The ANA covers Logar from units based in nearby Kabul. Logar is a poppy-free province and received a Good Performance Award from the GOA last year in recognition of this achievement. Significant marijuana production occurs in Azra.

POLITICAL: Governor's Performance Uneven, but Population Loyal

14. (SBU) Governor Hashimi appears to have the support of most traditional leaders and is an efficient manager. He has little political clout in Kabul, however, which frustrates and undermines his efforts. He complains continuously about a lack of funding for his administration. Hashimi has not

KABUL 00002189 002 OF 003

been aggressive in dealing with the insurgent threat in Logar. His reluctance to travel to outlying districts to emphasize government control and authority hampers Coalition efforts and diminishes his personal influence. Under Coalition pressure to attend several district shuras, Hashimi instead abruptly went on extended holiday to his home in Europe. MP and former local mujahideen commander Dr. Fazulah Mujahadeen is perhaps the most politically influential figure in the province. An Attorney General's Office investigation in April removed several prominent provincial officials, including the Mayor of Puli Alam, the Finance Department Chief, the Governor's Office Personnel Director, and several prosecutors and administrative functionaries from the Education and Agriculture Departments. Governor Hashimi has not been linked to corruption.

15. (SBU) While Logar residents are largely pro-government and anti-insurgent, popular perceptions of and allegiance to the provincial and district administrators depend primarily on the personalities and capabilities of individual administrators. Residents of outlying areas rely more on traditional authorities and are frustrated by the government's inability to provide basic public services. Taliban-influenced Kharwar District has not shown any enthusiasm for development projects or expanded government influence and is a de facto autonomous zone. The Provincial Council in Logar has not yet carved an administrative niche for itself and functions chiefly as an advisory group to the Governor and provincial level committees, notably the PDC. The opposition United Front Party is active and has significant influence in Northern Mohammad Agha District, which has a sizeable (25 percent) non-Pashtun population.

ECONOMIC: Relative Prosperity

16. (U) Logar is a relatively progressive and prosperous area, owing to its proximity to Kabul, its stability, and its rich agricultural lands. Agriculture accounts for over 60 percent of employment in Logar, and another 30 percent of the people

are involved in trade and services. Livestock, wheat, vegetable, and fruit production predominate. Logar benefits tremendously by having a ready market for its products in nearby Kabul. A lack of sufficient energy resources hampers development --- only 21 percent of households in the province have access to electricity. The province lacks adequate electricity to power cold storage facilities to preserve and maximize the marketability of fruit and vegetable crops. Inadequate transportation links have deterred economic development in some districts, notably Kharwar and Azra. Governor Hashimi's top priority development project is a new road to Azra, which is cut-off from the rest of the province in winter and relies on transportation links through Nangharhar.

¶17. (SBU) One of Afghanistan's most promising foreign investment schemes is located in Logar. The development of a copper mine at Aynak will exploit significant copper deposits, possibly comparable to those in Chile. A contract will soon be approved with one of several international bidders. A significant and continuing return of "expatriates" (almost 13,000 families) to Logar are helping to resuscitate the economy. Governor Hashimi would like to build a village to house 12,000 homeless returnees.

¶18. (C) The US-led PRT has committed USD 2.4 million to active projects, mostly small-scale endeavors such as upgrading and constructing government buildings, medical facilities, schools, and providing humanitarian assistance. USD 34 million in road projects are planned and the PRT is seeking funding for the Azra road, which will cost roughly USD 60 million to complete. The relative stability of Logar and its development potential have attracted 12 active NGOs to the province, including CARE, IRC, and the Afghan Development Association. UNAMA covers Logar from its central

KABUL 00002189 003 OF 003

regional headquarters in Kabul, and five other UN agencies work in the province.

¶19. (C) The Czech Republic has expressed interest in establishing a PRT in Logar. The Czechs would set up the PRT base either co-located with Coalition forces in Puli Alam or at a nearby facility. The Czechs plan an enhanced contingent of 120 personnel, including a 60-person force protection unit. They hope to have the PRT fully operational by February 2008, pending approval in July or August by the Czech government.

CULTURAL/SOCIAL: Typical Ills

¶10. (U) Logar's relatively mixed population (75 percent Pashtun, 25 percent Tajik and Hazara) and the cosmopolitan influence of Kabul set the province apart from its conservative southeastern neighbors, notably Paktia and Ghazni. Women's rights are more advanced, except in isolated rural areas where traditional abuses continue unhindered. Women also suffer an alarming but typically high 12 percent maternal mortality rate. Literacy remains low at 28 percent of the population and only 30 percent of children (boys 40 percent and girls 20 percent) attend school. Traditional tribal social norms prevail outside of urban areas though this situation is gradually changing, especially in communities close to Kabul. The rule of law sector is relatively advanced in Logar, though traditional inter-tribal councils still play a prominent legal role. The performance of judges and prosecutors suffers in Logar as elsewhere from a lack of training and poor pay that makes them vulnerable to corruption.

¶11. (U) Health care is inadequate in Logar. Access to facilities in Kabul helps to ameliorate the situation, but barely. Sanitation continues to be a problem. Only 48 percent of families have access to potable drinking water. Malaria episodes and a shortage of physicians, malnutrition,

and an absence of sanitary conditions have contributed to a high mortality rate (19 percent) for children under five years of age. In March, significant flooding occurred as a result of the spring rains, causing loss of life and residential damage in several districts, notably in Mohammed Agha.

WOOD